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Liberia

The present report is a compilation of the information contained in reports of the treaty bodies and special procedures — including observations and comments by the State concerned —, in reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in other relevant official United Nations documents. It is presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. For the full texts, please refer to the documents referenced. The report does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights other than those contained in public reports and statements issued by the Office. It follows the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119. Information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the periodicity of the review, and developments during that period.

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Please recycle

I. Background and framework

A. Scope of international obligations[1]

International human rights treaties[2]

	Status during previous cycle	*Action after review*	*Not ratified/not accepted*
Ratification, accession or succession	ICERD (1976)	CRPD (2012)	OP-CRC-AC (signature, 2004)
	ICESCR (2004)		OP-CRC-SC (signature, 2004)
	ICCPR (2004)		ICRMW (signature, 2004)
	ICCPR-OP 2 (2005)		ICPPED
	CEDAW (1984)		
	CAT (2004)		
	OP-CAT (2004)		
	CRC (1993)		
	OP-CRC-AC (signature, 2004)		
	OP-CRC-SC (signature, 2004)		
	ICRMW (signature, 2004)		
	CRPD (signature, 2007)		
Reservations and/or declarations			
Complaints procedures, inquiries and urgent action[3]	ICCPR-OP 1 (signature, 2004)		ICERD, art. 14
	OP-CEDAW (signature, 2004)		OP-ICESCR
	CAT, art. 20 (2004)		ICCPR, art. 41
	ICRMW (signature, 2004)		ICCPR-OP 1 (signature, 2004)
	OP-CRPD (signature, 2007)		OP-CEDAW (signature, 2004)
			CAT, arts. 21 and 22
			OP-CRC-IC
			ICRMW (signature, 2004)
			OP-CRPD (signature, 2007)
			ICPPED

Other main relevant international instruments

	Status during previous cycle	*Action after review*	*Not ratified*
Ratification, accession or succession	Conventions on refugees and stateless persons[4]		ILO Convention No. 138[8]
	Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II[5]		ILO Conventions Nos. 169 and 189[9]
	Palermo Protocol[6]		Additional Protocol III to the 1949 Geneva Conventions[10]
	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide		
	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court		
	ILO fundamental conventions[7]		
	UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education		

1. In 2012, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recommended that Liberia ratify OP-CRC-AC, OP-CRC-SC, OP-CRC-IC, OP-ICESCR, ICPPED, OP-CEDAW, ICRMW and OP-CRPD.[11] CRC also urged Liberia to ratify ILO Convention No. 138.[12]

B. Constitutional and legislative framework

2. The United Nations country team in Liberia (UNCT) reported that, on 6 August 2014, the President had declared a three-month state of emergency to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus disease (EVD). During the state of emergency, the President was given the power to suspend constitutional rights, including restrictions on freedom of movement, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. However, the Government had failed to inform the State parties to the ICCPR, through the Secretary-General, of the provisions from which it had derogated and of the reasons by which it was actuated (ICCPR, art. 4, para. 3).[13] The state of emergency was lifted in November 2014.[14]

3. UNCT reported that senatorial elections had been conducted on 20 December 2014 and according to the provisional results, the recorded voter turnout was only of 25.8 per cent. Concerns had been raised over the human rights implication of conducting elections with EVD still prevalent in several counties and freedoms still restricted.[15]

4. The Secretary-General noted the establishment in August 2012 of the Constitution Review Committee, which was mandated to guide a nationwide, consultative review of the Constitution.[16] He reported that the Committee had held several consultations with stakeholders, including political parties, traditional leaders and civil society, and appointed female leaders to mobilize women's engagement in the reform process.[17]

5. UNCT stated that concerns had been raised that, given the importance attached to traditional values and belief systems, the consultative review of the Constitution fell short of sufficiently integrating human rights principles. Factors such as an insufficient time frame to conduct comprehensive consultations, inadequate civic education and the selective nature of the reviews, were some of the points that suggested that many Liberians might not be pleased with the outcome. UNCT recommended that Liberia ensure a comprehensive review of the Constitution, applying a human rights-based approach with a view to

reflecting the aspirations of the people and creating a human rights-compliant Constitution.[18]

6. In 2012, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was concerned about the draft legislation before the House of Representatives, which proposed an amendment to the Penal Code that broadly criminalized homosexual behaviour. OHCHR added that an amendment to the Domestic Relations Law, explicitly prohibiting same-sex marriage, was also proposed.[19]

7. CRC welcomed the Education Reform Act (2011), the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender-based Violence (2011–2015), the Education Sector Master Plan 2000–2010 and the Action Plan 2004–2015: Education for All.[20]

8. CRC also welcomed the enactment of the Children's Law (2012) and recommended that Liberia ensure its full and effective implementation. UNCT made a similar recommendation. CRC also reiterated its recommendation that Liberia undertake a comprehensive review of all domestic legislation to ensure full conformity with the Convention.[21]

C. Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures

9. According to UNCT, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), established in 2011, still operated at minimal capacity[22] and lacked funding to deploy substantive staff to coordinate human rights monitoring, investigation and field activities. UNCT recommended that the Government ensure adequate funding to enable the Commission to carry out its core mandate, and ensure that the process of selecting new Commissioners commenced in a timely and transparent manner.[23]

10. In 2014, the Secretary-General stated that the INHRC still needed to develop internal governance procedures so that it could perform its mandated role to engage on critical processes, and establish a nationwide mechanism for handling public complaints.[24]

11. UNCT reported that, in 2013, a National Human Rights Action Plan 2013–18 had been launched, and recommended that Liberia support and strengthen the existing coordination mechanisms led by the Ministry of Justice and allocate resources for the implementation of the Plan.[25]

12. Reiterating its concern about the lack of a comprehensive policy to guide the implementation of the Convention as a whole, CRC recommended that Liberia develop such a policy as well as a national plan of action on children and expedite the operationalization of the National Child Well-being Council.[26]

13. The Secretary-General mentioned that, in 2012, the President had launched Liberia Vision 2030, a long-term political and economic agenda for the country to realize its economic and social aspirations, which covered issues relating to a fair political system, security, rule of law and national reconciliation, among others.[27]

II. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

14. The Secretary-General mentioned that, after its first universal periodic review (UPR) in November 2010, the Government had put in place a mechanism to promote and monitor the implementation of the recommendations.[28]

A. Cooperation with treaty bodies[29]

1. Reporting status

Treaty body	*Concluding observations included in previous review*	*Latest report submitted since previous review*	*Latest concluding observations*	*Reporting status*
CERD	August 2001			Initial report overdue since 1977
CESCR	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2006
HR Committee	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2005
CEDAW	July 2009	2014	-	Combined seventh and eight reports pending consideration in 2015
CAT	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2005
CRC	June 2004	2009	October 2012	Combined fifth and sixth reports due in 2018
CRPD	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2014

2. Responses to specific follow-up requests by treaty bodies

Concluding observations

Treaty body	*Due in*	*Subject matter*	*Submitted in*
CEDAW	2011	Publication of the Convention; incorporation of a definition of discrimination against women into national legislation; legislation on female genital mutilation[30]	Reminders sent in 2011 and 2012[31]

Country visits and/or inquiries by treaty bodies

Treaty body	*Date*	*Subject matter*
SPT	2010[32]	Confidential

15. UNCT noted that, in 2014, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) had drafted a National Strategy on Treaty Obligations. UNCT recommended that the Cabinet fast track the endorsement of the Strategy, establish human rights focal points in all ministries and government agencies, and prioritize the backlog of treaty reports.[33]

B. Cooperation with special procedures[34]

	Status during previous cycle	*Current status*
Standing invitation	No	No
Visits undertaken	Independent expert on human rights in Liberia visited annually from 2004 to 2008	
Visits agreed in principles		
Visits requested	Freedom of opinion and expression	Internally displaced persons
	Extrajudicial summary and arbitrary executions	Foreign debt
	Torture	Extreme poverty
	Foreign debt	
	Independence of judges and lawyers	
Responses to letters of allegation and urgent appeals	During the period under review, three communications were sent. The Government did not reply to any communications.	

C. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

16. The Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) continued to monitor, report and advocate on the human rights concerns arising from the national response to the Ebola. Human rights issues raised included discrimination and stigmatization of patients, victims, survivors, their families and health workers; access to adequate food and water, sanitation in quarantine zones; and protests, sometimes accompanied by excessive use of force, resulting primarily from lack of communication or feedback on health measures to be taken or already taken.[35]

III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Equality and non-discrimination

17. CRC regretted that insufficient measures had been taken to implement its previous recommendations to eliminate all forms of discrimination, in particular against children in vulnerable situations. It recommended that Liberia ensure that all discriminatory laws, including customary laws, were amended or repealed and brought into full compliance with the Convention.[36]

18. CEDAW requested information on the steps taken to incorporate a definition of discrimination against women into appropriate national legislation and the incorporation of the principle of equality between women and men into the Constitution.[37]

19. CRC was concerned at the extent of gender-based discrimination, in particular against girls in rural areas who experienced persistent discrimination in access to education and social services and their right to property and security.[38]

20. Regretting that the granting of citizenship to children born in Liberia remained restricted on the basis of colour or racial origin, CRC reiterated its previous recommendation and called upon Liberia to amend its Constitution and citizenship laws to eliminate discrimination on the basis of colour or racial origin.[39]

B. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

21. UNCT mentioned that Liberia still observed a de facto moratorium on the death penalty although, as at November 2014, nine convicts were on death row.[40]

22. Remaining seriously concerned at the persistence of ritualistic killings of children and of harmful practices such as trials by ordeal, CRC urged Liberia to ensure strict application of the Children's Law to eradicate the practice of ritualistic killings and swift prosecution of the perpetrators of such practices and to enforce existing legislation prohibiting harmful practices, including trials by ordeal.[41]

23. UNCT reported that, on 19 and 20 August 2014, security forces had shot into the crowd which was protesting the Government's decision to quarantine a neighbourhood; three demonstrators were injured, one later died. The Government established a Board of Enquiry to investigate the case; its findings were yet to be made public. UNCT stated that the incident highlighted serious concerns regarding the level of preparedness of security forces to effectively handle mass protests and crowd control. UNCT recommended that Liberia implement the recommendations of the INCHR on the incident, conduct an effective criminal investigation and ensure that those involved were held accountable for human rights violations committed.[42]

24. In November 2014, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) noted that security forces had been weakened by the EVD epidemic and that several police stations in the poorest parts of Monrovia had closed after officers had become ill and/or died of EVD, while armed attacks and opportunistic crime had increased in the cities.[43]

25. UNCT mentioned that over 1,000 police officers had benefited from training on human rights.[44] It added that the Liberia National Police (LNP) continued to lack capacity in many areas, including logistics and expertise to effectively respond to crimes and security concerns. UNCT noted reports of LNP personnel extorting money from civilians as well as endemic acts of corruption. It recommended that Liberia allocate an adequate budget to progressively recruit more police; ensure the establishment of a civilian oversight body for the security sector, as committed by the Government; and further develop and strengthen the internal accountability mechanism within the LNP.[45]

26. In 2012, the Secretary-General noted that many Liberians still feared for their personal security because of the high incidence of violent crime and an inadequate justice system, which was exacerbated by overcrowded and poorly staffed prisons.[46] He had noted in 2011 that maintaining law and order remained a challenge, with frequent reported incidents of rape and armed robbery, as well as the prevalence of drugs and mob violence.[47]

27. The Secretary-General reported in 2014 that pretrial detention rates were high at 74 per cent and that insecurity at corrections facilities remained a concern.[48] UNCT recommended that Liberia sustain efforts to reduce the pretrial detention population following the EVD crisis and ensure that cases of pretrial detainees were processed in a timely manner.[49]

28. UNCT stated that the chronic shortage of food as well as lack of hygiene and sanitation in prisons remained a concern. It recommended that Liberia expedite the formulation of a separate legal framework which ensured a human rights-friendly

corrections system; improve basic prison standards and expedite the construction of the Cheesmanburg facility to decongest the Monrovia prison.[50]

29. The Secretary-General stated that response to, and management of, cases of sexual and gender-based violence and the high number of reported rapes, particularly those involving young victims, remained a serious concern. He reported that 70 per cent of victims were minors and nearly 18 per cent were girls under the age of 10.[51] The Secretary-General urged Liberia to put in place, with the support of the United Nations, a comprehensive prevention strategy that included more systematic monitoring, analysis and reporting.[52] UNCT made similar comments with regard to violence against women and children and recommended that Liberia enhance the capacity of the police to investigate cases of domestic violence and rape and fast track the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act.[53]

30. CRC remained gravely concerned that child rape and sexual offences were among the most commonly reported crimes and that a high number of cases were settled out of the court. It urged Liberia to enforce domestic laws that protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation; effectively investigate all cases; and prosecute and punish corrupt officials.[54] UNCT made similar recommendations.[55]

31. CRC was seriously concerned that there was no explicit criminalization of female genital mutilation (FGM) and that the practice was widely carried out in many communities, especially in rural areas. It urged Liberia to criminalize FGM and to stop issuing licences and permits to all practitioners of FGM.[56] CEDAW had requested follow-up information on the matter in 2011 and 2012.[57]

32. In 2014, the Secretary-General stated that harmful traditional practices, including abduction, forced initiation into secret societies and female genital cutting, continued to be reported.[58] He noted that the Ministry of Internal Affairs had worked with stakeholders, including traditional leaders, to implement Government guidelines regulating the activities of secret societies, including the prohibition of forced initiation.[59]

33. CRC remained deeply concerned at the practice of "Bush Schools" licensed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to be run by secret societies, which deprived children of education as well as a family environment, and exposed them to economic exploitation and initiation rites, including female and male circumcision. It urged Liberia to prohibit the recruitment of children into "Bush Schools" and to provide adequate protection to children who might be vulnerable to such recruitment.[60]

34. CRC was concerned that corporal punishment remained lawful in schools, in the home and in alternative care settings. It urged Liberia to explicitly prohibit, by law, corporal punishment in all settings.[61]

35. Alarmed at the prevalence and level of child labour in almost all sectors of the economy, CRC urged Liberia to, inter alia, bring to an end all forms of child labour and recommended that Liberia implement regulations to ensure that the business sector complied with international and national human rights, labour, environment and other standards.[62]

36. CRC reiterated its concern at the widespread practice of relocating children from rural areas to live in Monrovia for street vending, begging and domestic servitude. It recommended that Liberia strictly implement the Act to Ban Trafficking (2005); effectively investigate all cases of child trafficking; bring perpetrators to justice; and provide child victims of trafficking with adequate protection. CRC also made several recommendations to Liberia to develop a national strategy to support children in street situations.[63]

37. UNCT reported that the Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan (2014–19) had been launched in 2014 and that it was renewable every five years.[64]

38. CRC was concerned that armed actors along the borders continued to recruit children into their ranks and it recommended that Liberia prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed actors operating in the border areas.[65]

C. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

39. UNCT reported that, in 2013, Liberia had undertaken legal reforms to ensure access to justice and a speedy trial. Since then, four laws had entered into force; the jury system has been reformed; the jurisdiction of magisterial courts has been expanded; and criminal offences and sentencing have been reclassified. UNCT added that, despite the policy reforms and positive initiatives, chronic challenges remained in the justice sector, including prolonged pretrial detention, weak supervision and an accountability mechanism.[66]

40. The Secretary-General reported that the judiciary and the MoJ had initiated procedures for the regular review of detention cases and to address delays within the system. He added that the MoJ and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had continued to work towards developing policy options for harmonizing the customary and formal justice systems.[67]

41. UNCT recommended that the judiciary and the MoJ ensure the implementation of the resolutions of the National Criminal Justice Conference of 2013 and the recommendations of the Management and Accountability Review of 2013; provide the necessary resources for their implementation; strengthen accountability mechanism across the justice sector institutions, by enhancing supervision and ensuring action against officials who violate procedures, rules and the code of conduct.[68]

42. UNCT stated that the survivors of gender-based violence experienced difficulties accessing the justice system. It noted that, as those victims were usually poor and socially disconnected, they had no leverage to make the justice system work for them. Such cases were kept in the dockets for prolonged periods and ultimately dropped. The Secretary-General made similar comments.[69]

43. UNCT reported that, in 2012, the Government had launched the Strategic Roadmap on National Peacebuilding, Healing and Reconciliation (2012–30) and that the Palava Hut Programme, a mechanism for perpetrators to seek public forgiveness, had been launched in October 2013. UNCT stated that attempts to recruit experts to conduct the Palava Hut study and develop appropriate methodology had not progressed. It mentioned that many factors were responsible for the delay, including the Government's slow response to transitional justice issues; the perennial scarcity of resources; and the EVD outbreak.[70]

44. UNCT recommended that Liberia strengthen the capacity of the INCHR; provide ministerial support to implement the Palava Hut Programme; and continue dialogue at the national level to establish a mechanism for accountability with regard to human rights violation committed in the past.[71]

45. CRC was concerned that children younger than 16 were criminally liable and at the extensive use of lengthy pretrial detention for children and lack of due process. It reiterated its previous recommendation that Liberia reform the system of juvenile justice in line with the Convention.[72]

46. CRC commended Liberia on the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Act in 2008 and the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission, however, it was highly concerned that corruption remained pervasive. It urged Liberia to strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute corruption.[73]

47. The Secretary-General reported that a bill to implement a code of conduct for the civil service, intended to enhance transparency, accountability and good governance in the public service, had been reintroduced in the legislature in 2012.[74]

D. Right to privacy, marriage and family life

48. CRC appreciated the efforts to improve birth registration, but remained concerned at the low rate of birth registration as well as at the regional and gender disparities. It encouraged Liberia to increase the rate of birth registration.[75]

49. While noting as positive that the legal age of marriage had been set at 18 years for both boys and girls in the Children's Law, CRC urged Liberia to harmonize the legal provisions relating to the age of marriage in both customary and codified laws with the Children's Law.[76]

50. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that the Government had ensured that all refugee children born in Liberia and residing in the camps were registered and provided with birth certificates. However, it noted that the same exercise had not yet been extended to refugees living in communities. UNHCR recommended that Liberia extend the birth registration exercise to the latter.[77]

E. Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly

51. The Secretary-General noted that many sectors of the public had raised concerns that some Liberian laws were outdated remnants of past oppressive regimes, including the application of sedition laws against anti-government groups and laws of criminal and civil libel that allowed seemingly excessive damage amounts to be awarded. He welcomed the President's statement recalling the signing by the Government of the Table Mountain Declaration of 2012 and recognizing its call to decriminalize freedom of expression.[78]

52. The Secretary-General stated that concerns about the Government's commitment to press freedom had been triggered by arrests of outspoken critics of the President. In 2014, a radio journalist had been detained on charges of "terroristic threats" for statements made about the President's stepson who was head of the National Security Agency.[79]

53. United Nations Education,Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Liberia decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code; develop self-regulatory mechanism in the media; ensure that journalists and media workers were able to practice their profession in a free and safe environment and investigate all attacks on journalists and media workers.[80]

54. OHCHR was concerned about the atmosphere of intimidation and violence against LGBT activists, as well as reports of attacks against them.[81]

55. In 2013, the Secretary-General reported that several generally peaceful demonstrations had taken place, many of them involving public- and private-sector workers demanding salary arrears.[82] In 2014, he noted that tensions relating to land concessions were continuing to provoke violent demonstrations, including in Nimba County in July of that year.[83]

F. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

56. In 2013, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) reported that, despite improving economic conditions, Liberia experienced high levels of

unemployment, which was estimated to be 18.8 per cent for males and 34.2 per cent for females. The informal sector accounted for 68 per cent of employment, primarily in agriculture, forestry and fishing, as well as in the wholesale and retail trade. UNDAF stated that women were disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors, with 90 per cent employed in the informal sector or in agriculture.[84]

57. The Secretary-General stated that an enormous risk to the country's stability was posed by the large population of unskilled, unemployed, war-affected youths, many of them former combatants, who lacked livelihood opportunities. He added that, while efforts were under way by the Government to provide some vocational training and short-term employment programmes, an expanded approach to developing skills and prospects would be essential.[85]

G. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

58. UNDAF stated that 63.8 per cent of Liberia's 3.5 million people lived below the poverty line, with 47.9 per cent living in extreme poverty. Nevertheless, since the end of the conflict in 2003, Liberia had become one of the world's fastest growing economies, mainly due to the expansion of mining activities. UNDAF reported that agriculture was the primary source of livelihood for two thirds of Liberia's population, however, food insecurity remained high and 41 per cent of Liberians consumed insufficient food.[86]

59. UNCT reported that the spread of the Ebola virus had hit hard on the already challenged socioeconomic condition. Self-employment activities had been seriously affected due to the closure of popular markets; general economic activities such as domestic food production, mining, hospitality, transport services had slowed down; and many Liberians had lost their jobs. Also, access to basic commodities had been seriously affected by restriction of movement, closure of local markets, price hikes and obstruction of commodities supply routes from the counties. UNCT recommended that Liberia develop a long-term recovery plan to ensure access to health, education and employment.[87]

60. UNHCR reported that there had been criticism of the Government's handling of the Ebola crisis, which citizens had decried as poorly managed to the extent that the disease outbreak had affected almost every facet of Liberian society, and economic and social activities had dwindled. It added that the humanitarian situation in Liberia had been and continued to be very challenging due to the EVD outbreak.[88]

H. Right to health

61. UNCT reported that, with the rise in the rate of EVD infections countrywide from June to November 2014, major health institutions had been forced to shut down as many health workers had become infected due to lack of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and shortage of expertise. It reported that for three months, patients suffering from non-EVD-related diseases had been denied access to hospitals and many had been told to return to their homes, where they died unattended by medical practitioners.[89] UNMEER added that EVD had crippled the provision of treatment and care to people living with HIV/AIDS.[90]

62. CRC remained seriously concerned that many communities still lacked access to basic health-care services, in particular in rural areas, and that there were persistent inequalities and regional disparities in the distribution of health personnel and in access to essential health services. It recommended that Liberia, inter alia, improve access to basic health-care services and implement a strong primary health-care system to cover the whole country.[91]

63. CRC was concerned at the difficulties faced by pregnant women in rural areas in accessing referral services, resulting in, inter alia, an unacceptably high maternal mortality rate, and at the high levels of child morbidity and mortality. CRC recommended that Liberia develop an accessible system of antenatal care and ensure access to emergency obstetric care.[92]

64. CRC commended the high-level commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS and recommended that Liberia intensify the comprehensive HIV information/education campaign and ensure proper coverage for HIV testing and antiretroviral provision.[93]

I. Right to education

65. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations reported that, in 2011, the net enrolment rate in primary education was 41 per cent and that 66 per cent of children completed primary education. While noting the various measures taken by the Government to improve access to education, the Committee expressed its concern at the low rates of enrolment as well as the high drop-out rates at the primary and secondary levels. It urged the Government to intensify its efforts to improve the functioning of the education system and to facilitate access to free basic education for all children, especially girls. CRC made similar recommendations.[94]

66. UNDAF reported that the gender gap was also apparent in education and that illiteracy rates among women aged 15 to 49 were especially high at 60 per cent, compared to men, at 30 per cent.[95]

67. In 2013, the Secretary-General noted that the Government had begun implementation of guidelines to regulate the traditional practices of the Sande and Poro secret societies which impeded children from attending school in some areas. He reported that as a result of secret society activities, the enrolment of children, in particular girls, in formal schooling had continued to fall in some counties.[96]

68. UNESCO stated that Liberia had made efforts to further promote the right to education with the help of the international community and had allowed improvement in the rights of children and women by adopting a human rights perspective and improving the budget allocation for education. However, it noted that Liberia had not taken sufficient measures to promote human rights education.[97]

69. UNCT stated that, due to the spread of EVD, schools had been ordered close in June 2014 and an estimated 1.4 million students had been forced to stay home. According to UNCT, many of those students had taken up jobs and some would opt not to return to school when the danger of EVD cleared. It recommended that Liberia develop a programme to provide education through radio to bridge the gap in education.[98]

J. Persons with disabilities

70. CRC was concerned about the high level of stigmatization of children with disabilities, and recommended that Liberia, inter alia, ensure immunization and access to basic health care to children with disabilities; provide adequate support to children with disabilities and their families; and allocate sufficient resources to the National Commission on Disabilities.[99]

K. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

71. UNHCR noted that the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness had not yet been incorporated into domestic legislation and that the legislation of Liberia contained some critical gaps that might lead to statelessness. It recommended that Liberia undertake a review of the nationality legislative framework to ensure that it included all necessary safeguards against statelessness and take measures to develop a national action plan.[100]

72. UNHCR mentioned that the 1993 Refugee Act was being amended to address the gap identified with other key instruments and that it was presently with the legislature for passage.[101]

73. UNHCR stated that some 39,991 refugees enjoyed a favourable protection environment, including their rights to security of person, freedom of movement and equal protection of the law.[102]

74. While acknowledging the commitment of the Government in the determination of refugee status, UNHCR remained concerned about the slow pace of the processing of claims at the first instance.[103]

75. UNHCR recommended that Liberia reinforce the capacity of the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission by allocating sufficient resources; maintain fully open access to asylum procedures for persons in need of international protection; refrain from deporting persons; and reinforce the training of officers assigned to entry points (borders) on the rights of persons in need of international protection.[104]

76. CRC was concerned that there was no mechanism to provide protection and assistance to refugee children. It recommended that Liberia strengthen its assistance to refugee children seeking asylum, and set up a specific mechanism to protect and assist separated and unaccompanied children particularly.[105]

L. Right to development, and environmental issues

77. In 2014, the Secretary-General reported that progress had been made in establishing legislative and policy frameworks for land reform and that the Land Commission had completed and submitted to the President a draft legislation to transform the land rights policy into law. He stated that the policy envisaged a reconfigured system of land tenure to provide all Liberians with equal access and secure rights to land and property, and that it integrated all forms of land ownership to allow communities to enjoy the benefits of natural resources.[106]

78. CRC regretted that multinational companies were operating in the absence of clear regulatory frameworks to ensure adherence to international human rights, labour, environment and other standards and was concerned that issues relating to relocation that affected families and communities in mining areas were not discussed with or communicated to the persons concerned, nor to the public. It recommended that Liberia require assessments, consultations and disclosure by companies on the human rights impact of measures such as relocation of communities or establishment of production quotas.[107]

79. In 2013, the Panel of Experts on Liberia (Panel) reported that the forestry sector remained in disarray as the ongoing issues relating to the illegal allocation of forest resources through the misuse of private-use permits remained unresolved. It stated that the situation was a symptom of larger, unaddressed problems in the forestry sector; the broader weakness of natural resource governance; and the persistent inadequacies of the land tenure framework in Liberia.[108]

80. The Panel remained concerned that the Government did not provide adequate oversight of mining areas and consequently, there was significant smuggling of gold and diamonds to and from Liberia, which undermined the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. It found that thousands of former militia fighters, many of them still under the patronage of their former commanders, were engaged in illicit mining of gold and diamonds and it remained concerned that the mines provided recruitment grounds and self-sustaining staging areas for militant activity.[109]

81. The Panel stated that Government control over the alluvial gold sector remained very weak and that poor infrastructure, the remote border locations of many mines and the underfunding of personnel of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy made monitoring of the sector extremely difficult. Consequently, the illegal mining of and trafficking in gold continued almost entirely unhindered.[110]

Notes

[1] Unless indicated otherwise, the status of ratification of instruments listed in the table may be found on the official website of the United Nations Treaty Collection database, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, http://treaties.un.org/. Please also refer to the United Nations compilation on Liberia from the previous cycle (A/HRC/WG.6/9/LBR/2).

[2] The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR;
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR;
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW;
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT;
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child;
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure;
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD;
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

[3] Individual complaints: ICCPR-OP 1, art. 1; OP-CEDAW, art. 1; OP-CRPD, art. 1; OP-ICESCR, art. 1; OP-CRC-IC, art. 5; ICERD, art. 14; CAT, art. 22; ICRMW, art. 77; and ICPPED, art. 31. Inquiry procedure: OP-CEDAW, art. 8; CAT, art. 20; ICPPED, art. 33; OP-CRPD, art. 6; OP-ICESCR, art. 11; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 13. Inter-State complaints: ICCPR, art. 41; ICRMW, art. 76; ICPPED, art. 32; CAT, art. 21; OP-ICESCR, art. 10; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 12. Urgent action: ICPPED, art. 30.

[4] 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

[5] Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (First Convention); Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (Second Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Convention); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). For the official status of ratifications, see International Committee of the Red Cross, www.icrc.org/IHL.

[6] Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

[7] International Labour Organization Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation Convention, 1958 (No. 111); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

[8] International Labour Organization Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)..

[9] International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); and Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

[10] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III). For the official status of ratifications, see International Committee of the Red Cross, www.icrc.org/IHL.

[11] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, para. 85; UNCT submission for the UPR of Liberia, para. 16.

[12] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, para. 78.

[13] UNCT submission, paras. 2 and 3; also S/2014/644, third paragraph.

[14] S/2014/945, para. 15.

[15] UNCT submission, paras. 7 and 8.

[16] S/2013/124, para. 3.

[17] S/2014/123, para. 11; also UNCT submission, para. 13.

[18] UNCT submission, paras. 14 and 15.

[19] OHCHR, Press briefing note on Sudan (Darfur), Viet Nam and Liberia, 3 August 2012, available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12404&LangID=E; also S/2012/641, para. 20.

[20] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 3 and 5.

[21] Ibid., paras. 10–11; also UNCT submission, para. 15.

[22] UNCT submission, para. 54. See also S/2011/497, para. 39; and S/2012/641, para. 21.

[23] UNCT submission, paras. 56 and 57.

[24] S/2014/123, para. 28.

[25] UNCT submission, paras. 11 and 35; also S/2014/123, para. 27.

[26] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 12–15.

[27] S/2013/124, para. 2.

[28] S/2011/497, para. 38.

[29] The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
HR Committee	Human Rights Committee;
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
CAT	Committee against Torture;
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child;
CMW	Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances;
SPT	Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture.

[30] CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/6, para. 49.
[31] See letters dated 4 November 2011 and 14 March 2012 from the Rapporteur for follow-up on concluding observations of CEDAW to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/LBR/INT_CEDAW_FUL_LBR_19203_E.pdf and http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/LBR/INT_CEDAW_FUL_LBR_19204_E.pdf.
[32] CAT/C/46/2, para. 15..
[33] UNCT submission, paras. 19 and 20.
[34] For the titles of special procedures, see www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Themes.aspx and www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Countries.aspx.
[35] OHCHR, ESCR Bulletin, December 2014, available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/ESCRBulletin.aspx.
[36] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 33 and 34.
[37] CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/6, para. 49; also letters dated 4 November 2011 and 14 March 2012 from the Rapporteur for follow-up on concluding observations of CEDAW to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations (see endnote 31).
[38] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2–4, para. 33.
[39] Ibid., paras. 41 and 42
[40] UNCT submission, para. 20.
[41] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 37, 38, 51 and 52; also UNCT submission, para. 53.
[42] UNCT submission, para. 6; also S/2014/945, para. 34.
[43] UNMEER, Global Ebola Response, External Situation Report, 12 November 2014, para. 22, available from http://ebolaresponse.un.org/sites/default/files/situation_report-ebola-12nov14.pdf.
[44] UNCT submission, para. 50; see also S/2012/641, para. 21.
[45] UNCT submission, para. 52.
[46] S/2012/230, para. 18.
[47] S/2011/72, para. 10.
[48] S/2014/598, para. 33; also S/2014/123, para. 49.
[49] UNCT submission, para. 49.
[50] UNCT submission, para. 49; also S/2013/479, para. 52 and S/2012/641, para. 35.
[51] S/2011/497, para. 36 and S/2013/124, para. 11.
[52] S/2014/181, para. 71.
[53] UNCT submission, paras. 26 and 31.
[54] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 49–50; also S/2012/641, para. 31; S/2013/479, para. 93 and S/2014/123, para. 48.
[55] UNCT submission, para. 27.
[56] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 51 and 52; also UNCT submission, paras. 27 and 28.
[57] CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/6, para. 49; also letters dated 4 November 2011 and 14 March 2012 from the Rapporteur for follow-up on concluding observations of CEDAW to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Liberia to the United Nations (see endnote 31).
[58] S/2014/598, para. 22; also S/2013/479, para. 27.
[59] S/2012/641, para. 20.
[60] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 51, 52 and 72 (j).
[61] Ibid., paras. 45 and 46.
[62] Ibid., paras. 30, 77 and 78.
[63] Ibid., paras. 79–82; see also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, direct request concerning ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) – Liberia, adopted in 2013, published 103rd ILC session (2014), available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3139023:NO.
[64] UNCT submission, para. 11; also S/2014/598, para. 23.
[65] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 75 and 76.
[66] UNCT submission, paras. 46 and 47; see also S/2012/230, para. 39; S/2011/497, para. 35 and S/2011/72, para. 29.
[67] S/2013/124, paras. 48 and 49; see also S/2014/123, para. 49.
[68] UNCT submission, para. 47.

[69] UNCT submission, para. 29; also S/2013/479, para. 27; S/2012/641, para. 34; S/2011/72, para. 32 and S/2013/124, para. 48.
[70] UNCT submission, paras. 9 and 25; see also S/2014/123, para. 8; S/2014/598, para. 10; S/2013/479, para. 87; S/2011/497, para. 4; and S/2011/72, para. 6.
[71] UNCT submission, para. 25.
[72] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 83 and 84.
[73] Ibid., paras. 18 and19.
[74] S/2012/641, para. 42.
[75] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 43 and 44.
[76] Ibid., paras. 31 and 32.
[77] UNHCR submission for the UPR of Liberia, p. 6.
[78] S/2014/123, para. 85.
[79] S/2014/598, para. 8.
[80] UNESCO submission for the UPR of Liberia, paras. 26–28.
[81] OHCHR, Press briefing note on Sudan (Darfur, Viet Nam and Liberia, 3 August 2012, available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12404&LangID=E; see also S/2012/641, para. 20.
[82] S/2013/124, para. 13; also S/2013/479, para. 13 and S/2013/479, para. 14.
[83] S/2014/598, para. 9; and S/2014/123, para. 16.
[84] United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Liberia 2013–2017, 13 February 2013, p. 18, available from www.unliberia.org/doc/undaf20132017.pdf.
[85] S/2012/230, para. 19. See also S/2013/124, para. 30 and S/2011/72, para. 7.
[86] UNDAF, Liberia 2013–2017, 13 February 2013, p. 17 (see endnote 84).
[87] UNCT submission, para. 41.
[88] UNCHR submission, p. 2.
[89] UNCT submission, para. 5, also para. 37.
[90] UNMEER, Global Ebola Response: External Situation Report, 24 November 2014, para. 18, available from http://ebolaresponse.un.org/sites/default/files/situation_report-ebola-24nov14.pdf.
[91] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 62 and 63.
[92] Ibid., paras. 64 and 65.
[93] Ibid., paras. 68 and 69.
[94] ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, direct request concerning ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) — Liberia, adopted in 2013, published 103rd ILC session (2014), available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3139023:NO and CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, para. 72.
[95] UNDAF, Liberia 2013–2017, 13 February 2013, p. 17 (see endnote 84).
[96] S/2013/124, para. 27 and S/2012/641, para. 20.
[97] UNESCO submission, para. 24.
[98] UNCT submission, paras. 5, 38 and 41.
[99] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 60 and 61.
[100] UNHCR submission, pp. 2, 4 and 6.
[101] Ibid., p. 1.
[102] Ibid., p. 2.
[103] Ibid., p. 3.
[104] Ibid., pp. 3–4.
[105] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 73 and 74.
[106] S/2014/123, para. 13; S/2013/479, para. 9; also S/2012/230, para. 20; S/2013/124, para. 86 and S/2013/479, para. 66.
[107] CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4, paras. 29 and 30.
[108] S/2013/683, para. 126.
[109] S/2014/363, paras. 65 and 66; also S/2011/72, para. 44; S/2012/641, para. 44; and S/2014/598, para. 47.
[110] S/2013/683, para. 114.